

## WHO'S WHO IN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

### QUIZ

Change agents, adopters, sponsors, champions, opinion leaders. The labels get used a lot and sometimes interchangeably in practice discussions of organizational change. But in the published literature, these functional roles are distinct. Test your knowledge about who's who by matching the label to the description:

1. Adopter
  2. Change agent
  3. Opinion leader
  4. Champion
  5. Sponsor
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- A. Someone targeted for behavior change responsible for making a decision about an innovation in the social system that you want to affect. Understanding whether your specified targets would both adopt (decide) and implement (use) your innovation is important. In complex organizations, the targets responsible for deciding about an innovation are often not the people who are responsible for implementing the innovation.
  - B. Someone trained to be expert about the innovation in question and responsible for communicating the innovation's advantages with adopters and supporting the continued use of the innovation. Typically, they are most effective when they are recruited from the system that is the object of change. A common threat to their insider status and indigenous knowledge is a tendency over time to increasingly reflect the values, language, and perspectives of the sources of innovation, rather than those of target adopters and implementers.
  - C. Someone in a position of authority within the targeted organization who controls the allocation of resources. They are typically high in positional authority and supervise the work of others, and are important in change efforts when they are enlisted to signal the legitimacy of the innovation in question by lending their personal or institutional credibility to the change effort. For innovations that will consume resources to implement and sustain their support is critical.
  - D. Someone who is a member of the targeted organization and who advocates on behalf of the innovation. Often, they advocate out of a sincere belief in the worth of the innovation to solving a felt problem, and arise unlooked for from the population of adopters as they try out the innovation. Because they quickly become voracious users of the innovation, they are the first persons to encounter problems with implementing an innovation and, thus, act as effective sources of implementation advice.
  - E. Someone who is perceived by peers to be trustworthy and expert, and knowingly or unknowingly influences the adoption decisions of others. Their effect is informal and exist in small proportions throughout organizations. They function to protect and reflect the norms of the social systems of which they are key internal members. They tend to be popular, communicative, accessible, and expert.

1=A, 2=B, 3=E, 4=D, 5=C